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Second Meeting of Governmental Experts
from Land-locked and Transit Developing
Countries and Representatives of Donor
Countries and Financial and Development
Institutions
New York, 19 June 1995

Report of the Symposium for Land-locked and Transit Developing Countries

**Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York,
from 14 to 16 June 1995**

CONTENTS

Chapter		Paragraphs
	Introduction	1-6
I.	Review of progress in the development of transit systems in the land-locked and transit developing countries (agenda item 3) and Proposals for appropriate future action (agenda item 4)	7-11
II.	Organizational matters	12-15

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Symposium for Land-locked and Transit Developing Countries was convened in New York from 14 to 16 June 1995, pursuant to paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 48/169. The purpose of the Symposium was to address specific regional problems in improving the transit transport systems, taking into account the recommendations of the first Meeting of Governmental Experts from Land-locked and Transit Developing Countries and Representatives of Donor Countries and Financial and Development Institutions, held in New York in May 1993.

2. In his opening statement, the representative of the UNCTAD secretariat said that the particular needs and problems of land-locked and transit developing countries had been a subject of discussions in various international fora for many years and, in spite of several initiatives by the land-locked developing countries and the international community, the challenges that they still faced continued to be formidable. It was to be recalled that 16 of the land-locked developing countries were classified as least developed countries; their developmental efforts were further constrained by their weak structural characteristics.

3. The land-locked developing countries had varying geographical and developmental features in terms of size, population and resource endowment. However, they shared the major disadvantage of having no sovereign territorial access to the sea. That fundamental handicap was accentuated by the fact that the transit transport systems along the corridors linking the land-locked countries to the ocean ports continued to be generally inefficient and unreliable, which gave rise to additional transit transport costs for their imports and exports which affected their overall development performance. The magnitude of those costs varied in the different regions and, in particular, was heavy in the African region where the payments for transport services as a proportion to total exports of goods and services amounted to well over 30 per cent in most cases.

4. He felt that the Symposium should address those issues that constituted the background of the transit problem and continued to require international attention. One important aspect related to the cooperation between land-locked countries and their transit neighbours. That cooperation was important in resolving most of the transit problems that continued to constrain the speedy, efficient and cost-effective movement of transit cargo. To achieve a transit system that took into account mutual concerns and advantages, it was essential that both land-locked and transit countries made deliberate efforts to establish a legal, institutional and operational framework that promoted the mutual interest of all parties concerned.

5. The inadequacies of the transit transport systems cut across all modes of transport and related to all facilities and services, such as port and storage facilities, transit insurance facilities, communication facilities, banking facilities and freight forwarding and clearing services. Donor capital and technical assistance projects at the national and subregional levels contributed to alleviate those inadequacies but greater efforts were still required.

6. Issues for regional deliberations included inadequate maintenance of the physical infrastructure facilities along the transit corridors, implementation of bilateral and subregional legal transit agreements concluded between land-locked and transit countries, and acute manpower deficiencies contributing to the poor management and operational services. It was expected that modalities for tackling those problems more efficiently should be fully elaborated, including the role which the international community could further play in supporting national and subregional efforts. The Symposium was expected to provide a new impetus to the triangular arrangements between land-locked countries, transit countries and their development partners in the effort to promote a more efficient and self-sustainable transit cooperation.

Chapter I

REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSIT SYSTEMS IN THE LAND-LOCKED AND TRANSIT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

(Agenda item 3)

PROPOSALS FOR APPROPRIATE FUTURE ACTION

(Agenda item 4)

7. For its consideration of these agenda items, the Symposium had before it the agreed conclusions and recommendations of the first Meeting of Governmental Experts from Land-locked and Transit Developing Countries and Representatives of Donor Countries and Financial and Development Institutions, held in New York in May 1993 (TD/B/LDC/AC.1/3), as well as the results of specific studies related to transit and its alternatives (TD/B/40(1)/4). It also had before it the following basic documents: a note by the UNCTAD secretariat entitled "Improvement of transit transport systems in land-locked and transit developing countries: issues for consideration" (UNCTAD/LLDC/SYMP/3); "Contributions by individual countries, and by international and intergovernmental organizations" (UNCTAD/LLDC/SYMP/2 and Add.1); and a report by the UNCTAD secretariat entitled "Subregional and regional synopsis of the current transit transport situation and difficulties" (UNCTAD/LLDC/SYMP/4). In addition to these documents, a range of background documents were also made available to the Symposium (for the list of documents, see Annex III in TD/B/LDC/AC.1/8/Add.1 (English only)).

8. In his opening statement, the Chairman stated that the plight of the land-locked countries had a long history. The initial discussions of the transit problems focused on the legal aspects of transit. It was 1957 when the General Assembly in its resolution 1028 (XI) raised the question of the land-locked countries and the expansion of international trade. At that time, they were only five independent land-locked developing countries. By 1990, the number had increased to 21 countries, which together constituted 5.4 per cent of the population of all developing countries. With the transformation of the former USSR into the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) during the course of 1991, seven new developing landlocked states had been created. Ethiopia recently became land-locked with the creation of the State of Eritrea. The problems facing the land-locked countries have been accentuated by the world economic crises of recent years which hit many of these countries harshly. The existing transit infrastructure rapidly deteriorated and the resources required for rehabilitation and further development dwindled. He noted that this Symposium was designed to provide the land-locked and transit countries an opportunity to exchange experiences about the particular problems they faced in their respective regions and subregions. The outcome of these deliberations would be shared with their development partners during the intergovernmental meeting scheduled for the following week of 19 June.

9. The representative of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr. Rustam Yunusov, Deputy Prime Minister, made a statement outlining the difficulties faced by his country during economic transition and in establishing links with the world economy. Despite such difficulties, significant progress had been made in the petroleum sector, food self-sufficiency and augmenting metallic and non-metallic exports. However, transit transport was a major constraint to its economic and export growth and development. From ancient times, Uzbekistan had been at the crossroads of major trading avenues of the region and beyond. Efforts were being made to revive these trade routes through upgrading transport facilities including railways and roads linking Uzbekistan with the countries of the region. The Deputy Prime Minister provided a detailed account of the various transit routes that could link the Central Asian Republics with their transit neighbours in various directions. In that respect, he referred to the recently developed railroad in the Islamic Republic of Iran which, upon completion, should be the shortest and

most economic access to the sea for a number of land-locked Central Asian Republics. Beyond reviving those routes, it was important to establish appropriate maintenance and management facilities and human and institutional capacities in the area of transit transport. He emphasized that training of personnel at all levels was a matter of high priority.

10. After the introductory statements, the Symposium agreed that further detailed deliberations should take place in regional and subregional consultative groups (East/Central and Southern Africa, West/Central Africa, Asia, Central Asia, and Latin America). The outcome of these group deliberations provided inputs to a discussion document prepared by the Chairman, which was the basis for the final discussions of the Symposium.

Action by the Meeting

11. At its closing plenary, on 16 June 1995, the Symposium adopted "Proposals for the Development of a Global Framework for Transit Transport Co-operation between Land-locked and Transit Developing Countries and the Donor Community, UNCTAD/LLDC/SYMP/5. (For the text of the proposals, see Annex I in TD/B/LDC/AC.1/8/Add.1(English only)).

Chapter II

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Opening of the session

12. The Symposium was opened by the representative of the Officer-in-charge of UNCTAD on 14 June, 1995.

B. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1)

13. At its first meeting, on 14 June 1995, and its second meeting on 15 June 1995, the following officers of the Bureau were elected:

Chairman:	H. E. Mr. Percy Mangoaela (Lesotho)
Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur:	Mr. Antonio Fernando Cruz de Mello (Brazil)

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

14. At its opening plenary, the Meeting adopted the provisional agenda contained in document UNCTAD/LLDC/SYMP/1 as follows:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of agenda and organization of work
3. Review of specific regional problems to improve transit transport systems
4. Proposals for future action
5. Other business
6. Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations of the Symposium.

D. Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations of the Symposium

15. At its closing plenary, on 16 June 1995, the Symposium authorized the Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur to complete the report of the Symposium so as to reflect the proceedings of the plenary sessions.